

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GRANTS

2020 Project Reports



WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY





INTRODUCTION

To promote best practices in program-level assessment of student learning outcomes, in 2018 the Office of the Provost established the WSU Program Assessment Grant Program. The annual call for proposals invites Wayne State University faculty and staff to submit proposals to improve their academic or student services program's assessment efforts. The grant funds are available to assist in the piloting, creation, or significant revision of assessment instruments or processes, or to obtain professional development in program assessment. In this report you'll find descriptions of the 2020 grant projects.

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of faculty and staff volunteers who are experienced assessment practitioners from across campus. At least two reviewers independently evaluate each proposal using a rubric, and then reviewers meet to discuss and rank them. Priority is given to proposals with multiple participants that introduce innovative or experimental approaches to direct assessment or improved practices in student learning outcomes assessment at the program level, especially those that might serve as models for other programs.

Four projects were funded in 2020; each project's goals, activities, and impact are summarized in the pages that follow. Some highlights among the projects' efforts to improve their programs' assessment practices include:

- Piloting or development of new assessment tools or processes
- Professional development to build expertise in assessment
- Revision of program learning outcomes

For more information about the grant program, please see the [WSU Program Assessment Grants](#) page.

Catherine M. Barrette, Ph.D.
WSU Director of Assessment
c.barrette@wayne.edu
Office of the Provost



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Using Feedback Informed Therapy to Strengthen Program Assessment at CAPS: A Pilot Study

Recipients: Ellen Barrett-Becker, Jeffrey Kuentzel, Charisse Ormanian, Kristie Van de Laar, Tanya Vines, and ShaCha Geronimo, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Description of project goals: The goal of this study was to provide training and implementation of a new way of assessing client satisfaction with services provided by Counseling and Psychology Services (CAPS). Traditionally, CAPS has used short client satisfaction surveys once per year to assess satisfaction with our services. The current project aimed to introduce new continuous measures of client satisfaction, the Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT) measures. The FIT measures are completed by clients at the start and conclusion of sessions and assess general functioning as well as their feedback on therapy. The measures allow therapists to modify their interventions based on the feedback provided in the measures. The current study aimed to pilot these measures in our setting by providing training and support for implementation of these measures for a small sample of therapists.

Project activities: The CAPS project team completed the following activities:

1. FIT measures and training modules were purchased.
2. The Primary Investigator (PI) presented to CAPS staff and trainees about the FIT measures and the pilot study.
3. PI recruited six staff members and three trainees to participate in the pilot study.
4. Participating staff and trainees completed 12 hours of training on the FIT measures.
5. Participating staff and trainees began to implement the measures with their clients in Spring 2021.
6. Participating staff and trainees were provided additional training about implementation of the tools by the PI.
7. Participating staff and trainees met with the PI monthly to troubleshoot and provide feedback about the implementation of the pilot study.
8. At the conclusion of the grant, PI and participating staff met with the Director of CAPS to discuss sustainability of the project.



Program-level impact: At the conclusion of the pilot study, the PI asked all the participating therapists to complete a short survey about their experiences. Therapists who participated in the pilot described positive impacts both for themselves and the clients they serve at CAPS. All participating therapists indicated that the FIT training was beneficial to them as a practitioner. Several therapists noted that their training allowed them to become more comfortable, attentive, and eliciting of feedback, especially negative feedback, in therapy. Therapists also reported positive impacts with the implementation of the measures. Therapists indicated that the FIT measures assisted them in tailoring treatment to better serve their clients, and that this was particularly helpful for reticent clients.

Therapists noted that their clients took a more active role in their therapy because of the FIT measures, and experienced a strengthened therapeutic alliance, a key predictor of success in psychotherapy. Several therapists believed that the administration of FIT measures assisted clients in making more progress in therapy. One therapist reported that every-session administration of the FIT measures provided structure to their therapy sessions and helped them to become aware of what was most important for their clients.

This pilot study helped CAPS to train several therapists in best practices in feedback informed treatment. This training has helped those therapists to adopt that mindset into their therapeutic style. The combination of the training and implementation of the measures has assisted in clients achieving more therapeutic gains in their services at CAPS. As noted below, all participating therapists indicated that FIT training and measures should be adopted by our entire clinic. Pilot study therapists and our director have begun meeting to determine next steps in this process.

Individual impact: This project represented the first time that I (Dr. Barrett-Becker) have served as a primary investigator on a grant funded project. Because of this project, I developed new skills and grew as an administrator and psychologist. The grant writing process allowed me an opportunity to grow my skills in writing grants as well as build my understanding in documenting budgets. At the start of the grant, our administrative support staff struggled with allocating the funding. As PI, I learned about the process of allocating grant funding within a university setting.

In addition, the implementation of the pilot study allowed me to further build my skills as a leader. I served as a knowledge base and support to participating therapists. In our monthly meetings, I had to adopt the same attitude of eliciting feedback, but with therapists, around the



adoption of the measures. Much like our therapists, the study has helped me to feel more comfortable eliciting and accepting feedback. The culture of feedback can be contagious. My participation in the grant also gave me the opportunity to serve as a reviewer for the next funding cycle of assessment grants. Serving as a reviewer further developed my skills in grant writing, understanding grant budgets, and the grant funding process. It also assisted me in networking with other professionals at the university.

Recognition/Appreciation: I (Dr. Barrett-Becker) would like to recognize the therapists and clients that participated in the pilot study. Integrating a new tool and software system into therapy practice can be challenging at both a clinical and technological level. The therapists that participated were able to problem-solve how to interface with the MyOutcomes technology while meeting with students remotely. In our regular meetings, we developed protocols to document the use of the tools as well as processing how using the FIT measures impacted their clinical practice. It can be difficult to ask for negative feedback, and the therapists in the pilot adapted to this practice well. The clients who participated in the pilot also demonstrated flexibility in mastering the use of the software. It can also be difficult to provide negative feedback to your therapist. The clients in the pilot study did so and it improved their success in treatment.



Un Arroz Con Pollo: Assessing Mixed and Multidisciplinary Learning Modalities in an Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Recipients: Melissa Miranda Morse, Tamara Serrano Chandler, and Jorge L. China, Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, and Víctor Figueroa, Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Description of project goals: The Latino/a and Latin American Studies (LAS) minor was established at WSU in fall 2011 with a combination of existing and new courses. It draws from a variety of disciplines, including history, African American studies, literature, language, anthropology, sociology, and political science. We developed a curriculum that exposes our students to both theory and experiential learning. By the time a student completes the LAS minor, they would have conducted theoretical research, performed a service learning or field research project, and presented at an academic conference at least once (perhaps two or three times).

We sought to develop learning outcomes and assessment methods that best reflect the multidisciplinary nature and mixed learning modalities of our curriculum. Our current learning outcomes reflect the humanities backgrounds (and unintended biases) of its authors. Specifically, we want to strengthen our competencies and learn best practices for assessment of multidisciplinary, experiential, and conceptual ethnic studies programs. As the project took shape, we narrowed the scope to focus on our service learning component, which has been a prominent part of our program since its founding in 1971, with the ultimate goal of developing learning outcomes to assist in the proposal of a new, standalone capstone service learning course for the LAS minor.

Project activities:

Curricular changes:

- Created an official LAS cross-listing for Anthropology course ANT 3540 Cultures and Societies of Latin America (approved for fall 2020).
- Updated our special topics course description LAS 3000 Special Topics in Latino/a and Latin American Studies (approved for fall 2021).
- Submitted request for general education DEI designation for LAS/HIS 2430 History of Latino/as in the U.S. (approved for fall 2021).



Professional development:

- Attended IUPUI 2020 Virtual Assessment Institute (October 2020).
- Completed self-paced "New to Assessment" resources and Learning Assessment Research Consortium (LARC) assessment modules on the National Institute on Learning Outcomes Assessment's (NILOA) website.
- Reviewed assessment resources on James Madison University's (JMU) Center for Assessment & Research Studies and Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics websites.

Literature review and research:

- Developed a list of aspirational Latino/a Studies programs and reviewed any information available on their curricula, learning outcomes, and program assessment. Consulted Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR) and Hispanic Association of College & Universities (HACU) member lists as a starting point.
- Library search for scholarly articles on ethnic/cultural studies, curriculum, and assessment. Used NILOA's list of assessment journals as a starting point.
- Reviewed assessment websites of institutions highlighted by IUPUI Assessment Institute and NILOA, which are authorities on assessment, for their ethnic studies program assessment information.
- Reviewed literature on the following key topics:
 - Assessment methods for learning in the affective domain
 - Service learning in ethnic studies
 - Assessment of service learning
- Archival research focusing on the original (early 1970s) intent of our program and the service learning projects undertaken by our first student cohorts.

Hired a student research assistant:

- We hired a research assistant (recent alumnus) for the fall 2021 semester.

Hosted two focus groups:

- First focus group with 12 students pursuing the LAS minor completed January 2021. Focus of discussion was the students' thoughts on the minor and its four learning outcomes.
- Second focus group with 16 stakeholders (faculty, staff, current students, alumni, and career services partner) completed November 2021. Focus of discussion was the service learning and capstone experience for the minor.



Key focus group findings:

- When the College to Career Program in LAS was formally established in the late 2000s, the focus was on career readiness and exposing students to the industries within their chosen major. In the past several years, we have been shifting more toward community service learning projects that foster in students a sense of self-empowerment and community responsibility intended by our founders. Through the second focus group we learned that it is absolutely possible to have the community service learning projects fulfill both objectives, and that successful career readiness programs incorporate a broad array of competencies, including developing a sense of agency over one's community. While the service learning project may be in an organization or industry that is not part of a student participant's major field of study, there are connections to be made.
- People of color often have to navigate complex dynamics in the workplace and industry. The capstone service learning course can help facilitate those conversations and prepare students.
- Students are often intimidated when first seeing learning outcomes on syllabi and on program websites, but after taking various courses, they are able to perform the behaviors specified in the learning outcomes, and that boosts their academic confidence.
- Students seem to value, overall, the research and presentation opportunities in the minor due to the feelings of accomplishment and confidence that they gain. This motivates them to succeed in other areas.
- While students may not recall specific dates and events learned in history courses, they recall major themes and concepts years later.
- Students appreciate experiential course components, such as visiting murals in Southwest Detroit or being placed in a community service learning project. They enjoy the hands-on learning as a way to reinforce what they learn in the classroom and the meaningful connections made.
- Students recognize and appreciate the multidisciplinary nature of Latino/a Studies. [Note: This is huge, as we had talked about this at length when updating the LAS minor learning outcomes for the WSU assessment database in 2018.]
- Discussion of surveying alumni years later to have them articulate the impact of the program and specifically the service learning experience.

Changes to the project plan: Other planned work related to revised learning outcomes for the whole LAS minor could not be completed during the grant year due to the unanticipated impact that the COVID-19 pandemic would have on our operations and staffing during the 2020-2021 academic year. Due to intermittent staffing shortages, we had to narrow the project's scope



so that it was more manageable and push some activities, such as submitting a capstone course proposal, to 2022. Narrowing the scope to focus on learning outcomes and assessment in the service learning experience resulted in the following activities:

Addition of a fifth learning outcome and potential assessment options to the minor in Latino/a and Latin American Studies:

- **L05. Explain the role(s) that individual students have in their communities.** Upon completion of the minor, students should be able to characterize themselves as leaders in their communities and networks and demonstrate a sense of community responsibility.
- Assessment options:
- 5.1 Journal entries from service learning course (See L02 in table below.)
- 5.2 Responses from surveys distributed in LAS 1420 (introductory course) and capstone service learning course.

Creation of learning outcomes and rubric for service learning capstone course (see table below). This will be a major component of the capstone service learning course proposal that we are drafting.

Learning Outcome	(High)	(Moderate)	(Low)	(No)
L01: Identify the community and needs being served by the organization/project	Examines and describes the groups within the community and needs being served by the org/project. Discusses stakeholders beyond most obvious.	Describes the groups within the community and needs being served by the org/project.	Lists the groups within the community and needs being served by the org/project.	Unable to identify the community and needs being served by the org/project.
L02: Describe their own role in and impact on community	Expresses agency within community and can articulate their impact on the various communities of which they are part (present and future).	Describes self as part of community and explains impact within context of project.	Recognizes self as part of community.	Unable to recognize self as part of community.
L03: Demonstrate career-readiness competencies discussed in course modules (e.g., teamwork, equity and inclusion, leadership)	Demonstrates all competencies and can articulate transferability of skills in their chosen field, future career, and everyday life.	Demonstrates all competencies and reflects on usefulness within context of project.	Recognizes competencies and may demonstrate a few.	Unable to recognize competencies.

**Program-level impact:**

- Additional courses and curricular changes helped provide more options for assessment measurements of our minor's learning outcomes. The project team has already begun examining and revising current LAS minor learning outcome assessment tools as a result.
- Decision to make surveying of students a formal part of our LAS minor. Starting winter 2022, we will survey students upon taking their first course in the LAS minor (students overwhelmingly take LAS 1420 as first course) and then again in the service learning capstone course. The focus will be on attitudes and feelings about themselves and their community (affective domain). We will compare each student's first and second survey answers and use the data gathered for assessment.
- Establishment of partnership with Career Services specifically for the capstone service learning course. Director Shawn Pewitt has committed to sharing modules that discuss career-readiness competencies and to help facilitate discussion around the competencies with students.

Individual impact: As part of this project, we gained the intrinsic benefits of pride and connection to our founders. Our program prides itself on being a legacy of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and, while small, it has had a major impact on the lives of the thousands of alumni who have participated in it and the greater Detroit Latino/a Community and beyond. By examining the original intent and comparing it to our current practices, we experienced our own feelings of self-empowerment and connection to our community.

The project also helped me (Melissa Miranda-Morse) to identify a potential topic for my doctoral research. My goal is to begin a Ph.D. program in education in the next three years and focus on Latino/a student success in higher education. While conducting the literature review, I came across research that made connections between perceptions of ethnic identity and student success in higher education. I am particularly interested in the themes of consciousness-raising and decolonizing educational practices, and the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Velia Garcia, Louie F. Rodriguez and Leticia Oseguera, and Dolores Delgado Bernal.



Recognition/Appreciation: The project team would like to recognize the following people:

- Catherine Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment, for her unwavering support and mentorship throughout this process. We are a small academic unit, yet Dr. Barrette has consistently gone above and beyond for our program, giving us her time and attention, and most importantly sharing her profound expertise in the area of program assessment.
- E. Zach Morales, Director of the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, for thoughtful conversations and context at the beginning and ending stages of this project.
- All of the LAS students, alumni, faculty and staff who participated in the focus groups. Our community always answers the call whenever we ask.
- Shawn Pewitt, Director of Career Services, for her commitment to equity and inclusion in career preparedness, development, and placement, and for caring deeply about our students.
- Sarah Lebovitz, SEIU Archivist, and the staff of the Walter P. Reuther Library for all of their assistance and support in accessing, reviewing and scanning relevant documents among a treasure trove of archival materials.
- Josue J. Salas, Research Assistant, for his hard work.



Bone Saw Skill Assessment in Clinical Practice

Recipients: VeraLucia Mendes-Kramer and Dongping Shi, Applied Health Science

Description of project goals: The goal for this project was to determine if the current exposure in the didactic year of the Pathologists' Assistant program to bone saw operation with bone cutting and tissue selection in the form of simulation laboratory modules was sufficient to address the necessary entry-level skills set for Pathologists' Assistant students while in their clinical experiential year.

Project activities:

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for skill assessment of pathologic bone specimens in the pathology laboratory was developed and implemented in the classroom and in the pathology laboratory of DMC hospital affiliate (Harper Hospital).

- *Implementation:*

The Harper Hospital affiliate, one of the stakeholders who initially expressed concerns regarding student application of psychomotor skills post-graduation, facilitated the implementation of the standard operating procedure. The procedure was composed of 12 protocols covering operator equipment (bandsaw) handling, bone tissue cutting skills (which incorporated effective and appropriate tissue sampling), and cross-contamination of equipment and environment.

An assessment instrument for pre-, and post-task safety protocols was developed and implemented. The eight pre-task safety protocols addressed equipment operation and environmental safety and potential cross-contamination concerns. The post-task involved four safety protocols addressing operator safety and equipment handling.

- *Data analysis:*

The analysis of the data pertaining to the pre-task skills that establish safety protocols for bonesaw operation prior to tissue cutting indicated that 78% of students were successful in addressing the eight pre-task safety protocols. However, 22% of students were unable to meet expectations regarding protocols 4, 5, and 8 dealing primarily with assessment of equipment for potential cross contamination.

Analysis of the data pertaining to the post-task (tissue cutting) skills indicated that 89% of students successfully handled and operated the equipment, while 11% did not meet expectations for protocol 12.



An assessment instrument for student psychomotor requirements of task performance was developed and implemented. The assessment consisted of six psychomotor skills and addressed students' skill at selecting the appropriate sectioning plane(s) for the given tissue specimen plus psychomotor skills for operating the bandsaw equipment to retrieve the appropriate tissue sample for histological evaluation.

- *Data analysis:*

The analysis of the data indicated that 67% of students demonstrated the necessary psychomotor skills in selecting the appropriate plane and executing the dissection/sectioning that would attain the best tissue sample for further evaluation. Tasks 4, 5, and 6 of the assessment, dealing primarily with the execution of the section involving dissection/sectioning of the tissue, were highlighted as the underperformed areas of the assessment.

Changes to the project plan: Student evaluation of radiologic imaging for their given pathologic specimen(s) were not available for all specimens at the time of skill assessment due to radiologic staff allocation during the COVID pandemic, which caused a delay in patient charting and the immediate availability of the imaging.

Program-level impact: Through this assessment project, we gained insight on those areas that require additional training and simulation opportunities during the didactic year. The data attained through the assessment project highlighted cross-contamination of equipment and environment as well as utilizing the bandsaw to dissect/section the most encompassing tissue segment as those areas that require further training opportunities for students prior to beginning their clinical experientials/clinical rotations. The program plans to implement additional training and simulation modules in the coming Spring/Summer 2022 semester to provide students with the opportunity for further practice as well as immediate feedback.

Individual impact: The COVID-19 pandemic brought on many challenges that impacted the timely completion of the project. The culture change during the pandemic at the clinical affiliate where the project was conducted, created staffing availability shortages and student clinical delays that caused several changes in ascertaining the responsibilities of those involved. Although not optimal, these challenges created opportunities to learn about grants and the process in general.

Recognition/Appreciation: A special thank you to the Harper Hospital Clinical Preceptors for facilitating the delivery of the assessment instrument.



Building and Assessing DEI Knowledge in Career Services

Recipients: Padmaja Rao and Shawn Pewitt, Career Services Department

Description of project goals: Because Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) is one of eight skills competency areas that Career Services has needed to focus on a bit more, the goal for this project was to first have staff acclimate to principles and concepts discussed within DEI through formal training. The next goal was for staff to then reevaluate their workshops/presentations for any gaps in DEI knowledge. Lastly, through post-training and group discussions, staff would look to improve/redesign their presentations by infusing concepts of DEI to teach students, whose learning would be measured through assessments.

Project activities:

With assistance from a DEI training consultant, a pre-training survey was created and administered to staff to gauge/assess their knowledge of and comfort with DEI-related topics, including their comfort levels of working with students, faculty, and employers of diverse backgrounds. [<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CopyofDEIPre-TrainingSurveytoCareerServicesStaff>]

A subsequent discussion (post-survey) was held with all staff to debrief and answer any questions about the assessment grant and/or the mission of the office as it relates to DEI. This discussion was interactive in that staff members could freely type their thoughts anonymously on JamBoard, an interactive app found through Google.

The Career Collective provided a half-day training to staff in late April of 2021 on how to deploy equitable and inclusive career services to diverse identities effectively. Post-training, staff reflected on what they found useful about the training and ideas/thoughts they had about how to move forward. Discussion points centered around how to incorporate DEI best practices into Career Services operations such as: being aware of and using inclusive language, looking at what other schools are doing, engaging with colleagues in national orgs, etc. Based on group consensus, Career Services staff agreed to meet specifically to focus on DEI efforts once a month, starting in June for 1 - 1.5 hours (depending on the agenda). For the first meeting, staff were asked to come prepared with their ideas around the following four items:

1. What Career Services is currently doing as an office
2. What Career Services is doing well and should keep doing as an office
3. What Career Services should stop doing as an office
4. What Career Services would like to do (moving forward) as an office



By September 2021, several staff members had participated in and/or received certificates in DEI training via Accelerate, University of Michigan, and University of South Florida Muma College of Business. As of December 2021, several staff members continued discussions and trainings via Accelerate and articles on integration of DEI in coaching and caring for students. Also, as staff created programming they considered the impact of DEI.

Diversity, equity and inclusion was a topic during many staff meetings as well with university colleagues and employer partners. We added a Diversity resource page to the department website for WSU students and alumni. We worked with our WSU Career Services Network colleagues to implement changes to the mission of Employer/organization relationships. We hosted a "Careers & Culture" event series which focused on DEI in the workplace, higher education, and industry.

We will continue to look for additional opportunities to educate students and provide innovative coaching/instruction using a DEI philosophy.

Changes to the project plan: While we originally planned to revise our mission statement and hire a graduate teaching assistant to conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis of presentations conducted by staff before DEI training and after DEI training, our project plan changed. Due to staff losses, timing of projects that needed to be completed, and staff schedules, we will continue to review the department mission but have incorporated equity as a guiding principle of the department vision. Also, we will revise/create presentations and programming after the end of the grant timeline.

Program-level impact: All program areas within Career Services have been impacted as DEI is a career competency that is needed regardless of the type of employment a student pursues. There have been several outcomes in terms of new collaborations with the Career Service Network in terms of programming and events, including the aforementioned Careers & Cultures series. Additionally, we added DEI resources to our webpage, and collaborated on a project for the Employer Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pledge, which asks organizations to commit to uphold the DEI standards of WSU.

Individual impact: We are excited to have assisted the office with moving the needle forward in terms of thinking about ways to enhance the education, services, and resources we provide with a guiding principle of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Additionally, it became apparent that



we must consider the cultural wealth of WSU students and the importance of social mobility in the work that we endeavor to do.

Recognition/Appreciation: The project team would like to recognize the following people:

- Jule Thomas (Director, WRT Zone, and Senior Lecturer, English) was the previous year's recipient that helped Career Services determine timelines and receive any other information that could assist with analysis. Jule has been very supportive.
- Cathy Barrette (WSU Director of Assessment) has also been very supportive and has continually met with us to schedule check-ins to ensure Career Services is staying on track with goals.
- Padmaja Rao, who led the coordination of DEI training, debrief conversations, and overall commitment to the guiding principle of DEI in Career Services.
- The central Career Service staff and specifically Susan Crowley, who worked closely with our Career Service colleagues in MISB and the College of Engineering on the Employer DEI pledge and created the DEI resource page for our website.